

An argumentative essay prepared model for DEAL students

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An argumentative essay entitled The Real Truth About Veganism



Throughout the years, veganism has gained popularity not only as a way of eating but also as a lifestyle with a conviction of purpose. Veganism is not only about eating veggies all day, in fact, veganism is a way of living that excludes any kind of animal products, everything from makeup to dryer sheets to clothing can be made using animal products, and therefore, not safe for vegans. However, there are other reasons people go vegan such as religion, environmental impact, and many do not like the taste of meat. This being said, veganism has some great benefits if done well, especially when it is related to a vegan or plant-based diet. This essay claims to debunk some of the most terrible myths about the plant-based diet such as “vegans do not get enough protein,” “only vegans need supplements” and that “there are no health benefits to becoming vegan.”

To start, one of the most common myths about the vegan diet is that vegans do not get enough protein. It is true that consuming meat is a great way of getting enough protein into the body; yet, the truth is, most Americans are not under-consuming this nutrient. A proper vegan diet that includes plant proteins from sources like nuts, beans, soy foods, quinoa, and seeds, like pumpkin seeds, can satisfy protein requirements. Even athletes, who have particular protein needs, can meet their quota by choosing a variety of plant protein sources. As David Rogerson

points out in his article *Vegan diets: practical advice for athletes and exercisers*, “Athletes might need to consume higher amounts of these foods [protein, fat, vitamin B12, n-3 fats, calcium, and iodine] compared to omnivores and other vegetarians. However, through the strategic selection and management of food choices, and with special attention being paid to the achievement of energy... a vegan diet can achieve the needs of most athletes satisfactorily.”

Another common myth related to a plant-based diet is the fact that only vegans need supplements. It is true that people following a plant-based diet need supplementation for optimal health, but the truth is that not only vegans need to take supplements but also non-vegans. Omnivores usually point out B12 to be only found in meat, and therefore vegans need to take supplements for this vitamin. While it is true that B12 is found in meat, that does not mean it can only be found there. In fact, B12 is not made by animals, it is made by bacteria, and people used to find these bacteria in the water they drink, but now since the water supply is now treated and chlorinated to kill bacteria, it no longer supplies this nutrient, the same it is happening to the meat industry. Meat contains B12 because the animals accumulate the bacteria over the course of their lifetime, but since the meat is now being chlorinated, the bacteria cannot longer be found in the required dose in meat. Additionally, people following a non-vegan diet have “unexplained low vitamin B12 levels,” this is due to food cobalamin malabsorption, meaning the B12 that is naturally present in foods like meat is simply not absorbed. According to a recent study entitled *B12: Eating Meat is not the Answer*, Even if people ate meat three times daily with four to six hours between servings, they would be doing more harm than good considering the ill effects meat has on the body, and this is because deficiency is typically due to poor absorption, not poor intake. As humans age, their ability to absorb B12 declines. Plus, in order to get the B12 they need from food, they would need to eat three servings daily that provide no less than 25-percent of the Daily Value, having each serving at least four to six hours after the last.

Finally, the most common myth about veganism and a plant-based diet is that there are no health benefits to becoming vegan. “Due to the restricted nature of the vegan diet, there is a high risk of deficiency in a number of nutrients, including iron, B12, calcium, vitamin D and omega-3fatty acids. A number of these nutrients are found in rich quantities in animal products,

fatty fish and dairy,” explains Alicia Romano a registered dietitian at Tufts Medical Center and spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Certainly, animal products contain most of these nutrients. Nonetheless, this does not mean that these nutrients cannot be found in plants, in the case of iron, it can be found in spinach, calcium can be found in broccoli, the vitamin D is present in almond milk, etc. This being said, it is not true that a vegan diet can lead to deficiency of these nutrients, but not only a plant-based diet can obtain all the nutrients people’s bodies need, but it can also have a great health benefit to their body. Vegans are far more likely to reach the recommended 10 portions of fruits a vegetable a day, have lower rates of obesity, and reduced risk of colorectal and prostate cancer, not only this but a probiotic-rich, raw vegan diet appears to change gut flora and decrease symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, compared with a standard omnivorous diet. A research carried out by R Peltonen, M Nenonen, T Helve, O Hanninen, P Toivanen, E Eerola. Suggested that changes in the fecal flora of participants who consumed the probiotic-rich, raw vegan diet were found but no changes in those who followed their usual diet were found.

To sum up everything that has been stated, veganism is not for everyone and while one thing may work for one person, it may not work for other, but the truth is that most of the myths and some commonly held belief behind this lifestyle and a plant-based diet are mere superstitions. Either way, veganism or going more plant-based will bring additional positives to people’s lives, so find what is right for you, your body, and the environment.

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